

2 June 1954

FRENCH MOROCCO

I. Current Situation

- A. Extensive anti-French terrorist activity, which began with the deposition of pro-nationalist Sultan Sidi Mohamed ben Youssef in August 1953, shows signs renewed intensity despite extremely vigorous French counter action.
- B. In exiling, and imprisoning moderate leadership of dominant Moroccan nationalist party, Istiqlal (Independence), French handed nationalist movement over to party extremists.
- C. Terrorist activity includes: assassinations, bombings, arson, train derailments, and communications sabotage--averages one attack per day past nine months.
- D. Recent shift in direction of terrorist attacks:
 - 1. Has been directed against pro-French Moroccans--now being turned to include the French themselves. Recently terrorists attempted assassinate General Guillaume. On 15 May killed a prominent local French official.

2. Has been primarily centered in urban areas--particularly Casablanca---is now being turned also into rural communities.

E. Anti-US sentiment among Moroccan nationalists has increased.

1. Due to US support of France in 1953 UN General Assembly, and US support of France during deposition of sultan.
2. Terrorist attacks have not yet been directed against US air bases, or American nationals, but
3. There is growing nationalist tendency to link US to French colonial policy.

F. Development of passive resistance movement.

1. Concurrent with continuing terrorist activities.
2. Emerged in early April.
3. Designed as a nationalist show of strength, but has serious economic overtones.
4. Has taken form of a native economic boycott aimed at French monopolies.

- (a) Nationalists forbidden to smoke French tobacco or

(b) Expected to soon extend to milk and sugar.

(c) Moroccan farmers have been warned to stop use of modern machinery or their crops will be burned.

Later intelligence reports indicate crop burning may be extended to French settlers.

(d) Boycott enjoying considerable success in Casablanca and Rabat, and appears to be extending to other cities.

II. Indochina affects North Africa

A. As the position of France in Indochina deteriorates political situation in French North Africa likely to worsen.

1. Nationalist parties can be expected to exert every effort to obtain objectives.

(a) Though nationalists realize they are unable to throw out the French, they are capable of forcing France to maintain large detachments of troops in the area and thus seriously hamper French military

commitments elsewhere.

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(b) Nationalists are continuing to seek, and are getting, the support of Arab-Asian states.

2. On other hand, French, who value North African territories more than Indochina, will be more determined than ever to maintain their hold.

(a) While France would like to maintain position with cooperation of native population, its actions indicate it will hold by force if necessary.

3. Communists can be expected to take every advantage of France's weakening position in Indochina.

(a) On 27 May an Orbit transmitter in Budapest was heard for first time in Arabic broadcasts beamed primarily to French North African territories.

(b) While nationalist parties have, in hope of US support, carefully rejected offers by Communist parties in French North Africa for joint action against French, extremist situation increases likelihood of Communist participation.

III. Prospects

A. French increased concern with situation demonstrated 20

May with removal of General Guillaume as resident general and appointment of career diplomat, Francis Lacoste.

1. No indication as yet of nature of Lacoste's program.

2. He is believed, however, to personally favor more moderate policy.

3. A change of resident general's will not in itself, in absence of bold new policy, resolve impasse.

B. Lacoste's task will be difficult.

1. Constant friction and frustration has hardened positions of both protagonists, French and nationalists.

(a) Mutual distrust.

(b) Real French concessions, even in unlikely possibility, would probably be viewed with scepticism by nationalists.

2. The small conservative influential French settler group in Morocco has not changed its basically anti-

nationalist position.

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3. The nationalists, on other hand, would probably not settle for anything short of French public promise of independence with definite timetable and immediate steps toward autonomy. Even change of sultans alone would probably not save situation.

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NSC BRIEFING NOTES

2 June 1954

FRENCH MOROCCO

(Biographic Sketch)

BACKGROUND

Francis LACOSTE - new Resident General French Morocco

Appointed Resident General of French Morocco, 20 May, able experienced career diplomat. French Foreign Ministry's delegate to French Residency in Morocco from 1948 to 1950, under Marshal Juin. Handled North African problem in United Nations.

Staunch advocate French presence in North Africa, believed exponent more moderate policy, and might be able reconcile French and Moroccan views. Reliably understood to have strongly advised against deposition of former Sultan last year.

US officials who know Lacoste well generally agreed that extreme cleverness and ambition are dominant characteristics. Professional achievements due solely to own merits. Reportedly has intense will to succeed, is flexible, and willing to conciliate.

49 years old, entered diplomatic service in 1931. Until appointment as resident general was^a principal member of French delegation at Geneva conference.

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